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Anglicisms in German: the problem of variants

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In the analysis of Anglicisms in German one of the most striking features is the considerable number of variants which show a much wider range of different types than is usually found in other languages. Anglicism variants in German – both orthographic and morphological – sometimes require complex treatment and in many cases must be taken as two (or even more) entries in the Dictionary of Anglicisms.

The problem of variants in German Anglicisms is further complicated by the existence of *regional variants* of German – such as Swiss or Austrian. Each language community has a certain number of specific features concerning vocabulary, orthography, pronunciation and in a few cases even grammar, so it is not surprising that the consequences are felt also in the domain of loan words – in our case Anglicisms in particular.

Research into Anglicisms in various European languages usually reveals a considerable number of variants on different levels of analysis. This is to be expected as it is quite normal that a new word – in our case an English one – often goes through several degrees of adaptation before it is fully integrated into the native system.¹ Thus it is possible to have two or more different realizations both from the point of view of orthography and pronunciation as well as word formation.

The analysis of Anglicisms in German shows the above to be rather frequent although – as we have said before – variants are by no means an exclusive characteristic of German and are found in other languages also, German definitely shows a much wider range of different types.

¹ See Filipović, 1986:55

In Croatian there are mainly two types of variant: one is the orthographic variant (different way of writing one and the same Anglicism – mostly *the original English* versus *the adapted native* spelling like e.g. *remake* – *rimejk*) and the other the morphological one (one and the same Anglicism appearing with two – or more – different suffixes – e.g. *spidvejaš* – *spidvejist*). In German we became aware of the fact that there were other types of variant which had to be taken into consideration and that it was not always sufficient to just write them down. Moreover, we noticed that variants in German sometimes require more complex treatment and in many cases have to be taken as two (or even more) different entries in the Dictionary.² We have to bear in mind the fact that the Dictionary is compiled in such a way that each entry begins with the original English word that has served as a model for the respective Anglicism. This is why problems arise when we come across different types of variants. Here are some of the specific reasons:

I.

1. Anglicisms in German often show two *orthographic variants* but these variants mostly require a *different pronunciation* as well – one variant keeps the original (English) orthography and the other is adapted to the German orthographic system: e.g. *Spenser* and *Spenzer*; also *Plunger* and *Plunscher*. The respective pronunciations are /ʃpɛnsər/ and /ʃpɛntsɔ/; /ˈplʌndʒə/ and /ˈplʊnʃɔ/.

2. Not only that different orthographic variants very often influence the pronunciation of the loan word but sometimes even its morphological characteristics. Thus *Recital* is pronounced more or less in the English way /rɪˈsaɪtəl/ while *Rezital* is fully adapted to German pronunciation /retsɪˈta:l/. Both variants are of neuter gender but they differ in the plural form: *Recital* keeps the English plural form in *-s*, while *Rezital* gets one of the usual German plural endings: *-e*.

3. An even more complex case is the following one: different orthography (due to the opposition *original English suffix* versus *native German suffix*), different pronunciation, different gender and – as in the previous case – different plural form. Such an Anglicism is *Gallon* /ˈgɛlən/ which can be either masculine or neuter with the plural form in *-s*. The more adapted form is *Gallone* /gaˈlo:nə/ which is feminine gender and has the usual plural form in *-n*. It is important to note that in all the above mentioned cases the meaning is the same.

² *Dictionary of Anglicisms in German* which is to appear in the series of the project *Language contact in direct and indirect borrowing* conducted by R. Filipović at the Institute of linguistics, Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb

II.

Variants on the morphological level in most cases also differ from those in Croatian. Frequently the form is the same but there are two or even three possible gender attributions with no change of meaning. Such cases do not present any special difficulties and can be solved easily by just giving all the necessary data on the morphological level of the dictionary entry.³ Thus *Break* or *Output* for instance can be both masculine and neuter (*der/das Break*; *der/das Output*) but there is no difference otherwise.

What is more complex are those loans in which there is different gender, different plural form but also different meaning. There are many cases of this type and they also require two entries in the Dictionary: *der Bulldog* /'bʊldɔk/ is some sort of a machine and *die Bulldoge* /'bʊldɔgə/ is a breed of dogs; the respective plural forms are *die Bulldogs* – *die Bulldogen*. Very similar is the Anglicism *der Zyklon* meaning a sort of wind and *die Zyklone* meaning depression (in the meteorological sense) etc.

Different suffixes given to one and the same stem very often appear with verbs and one such case is *park-en* as opposed to *park-ier-en* (this difference is also a regional one which will be dealt with later in this paper – the second of the two verbs is used in Swiss German).

The verbs *camp-en* and *kamp-ier-en* are a similar case and one is easily tempted to take them both as Anglicism because the meaning is identical: however, according to German dictionaries, the first verb has its origin in English *to camp* while the second one is derived from French *camper*. There are more variants of this type but one must be very careful because the *-en* and *-ieren* realizations of seemingly one and the same English verb can be misleading. While in Croatian the verb *testirati* includes several meanings, some originating in Latin, some derived from English *to test*, German has two realizations: *testen*, which has its origin in English and means »to carry out a test« and *testieren*, which is an older loan derived from Latin and means »get a signature for being present at university lectures«. Needless to say only *testen* will be included in the Dictionary.

On the other hand there are verbal variants where an English verb gives two realizations in German which differ on several levels: thus E. *job* can be both *jobb-en* and *jobb-ern* in German. These two verbs differ in the first place because of the two suffixes; logically, the orthography and the pronunciation are different but what is more important, is the fact that although both variants are used colloquially the first

³ More about the levels of analysis in the Dictionary and the way they are presented can be found in Filipović (1991:1–10)

one means »to have a job«, while the second one has a derogatory meaning »to be engaged in some kind of a not quite honest job«.

Variants due to regional differences

The problem of variants in German Anglicisms is even more complex due to the fact that there are several regional variants of German: Austrian, Swiss, former GDR German and FRG German. Each of these language communities has a certain number of specific features affecting vocabulary, orthography, and pronunciation so no wonder consequences are recorded in the domain of loan words, in our case Anglicisms. As in the case of native words the most conspicuous differences can be found in the lexis itself. As a consequence several Anglicisms are only used in Austria or Switzerland: several sports terms, especially football, can be cited here like *Half*, *Back*, *Half-Back*, *Hands*, *Goal*, *Goalkeeper*, *Corner* etc. In Germany all these loans are substituted by loan translations (in the widest sense of the term) probably due to the – predominantly – purist tradition in this country. Thus *Verteidiger*, *Läufer*, *Handspiel*, *Tor/Treffer*, *Torhüter*, *Eckball/Eckstoß* are used instead. On the other hand some of the loans which were used in the western part got completely different names in the east: thus e.g. *Aerobics* became *Pop-Gymnastik* in GDR. It is quite obvious that these realizations cannot be regarded as variants in the narrower sense we have used before in this paper but they definitely have to be taken into account and marked in some way or another.

Differences very often appear in gender: *das* Festival is *der* Festival in Swiss German, *die* Rallye can also be *das* Rallye in Switzerland, the Swiss also say *der* Couch instead of *die* Couch, *der* Radio and not *das* Radio, *das* Tram instead of *die* Tram⁴ etc. Similarly, in Austria they say *die* Dress and not *der* Dress, *der* Barometer instead of *das* Barometer, *das* Pyjama, not *der* Pyjama etc.

In some cases it is just a minor element that differs, e.g. the plural form: thus Austrian has *die* Waggon-*e*, *die* Smoking-*e* instead of *die* Waggon-*s*, *die* Smoking-*s* in German.

Sometimes the difference is only in orthography: German *Scheck* is *Check* in Swiss but both are pronounced in the same way: /ʃek/ – the Swiss pronunciation of *ch* as /ʃ/ can probably be explained by French influence.

⁴ Generally speaking *Tram* is more frequent in the South while in the North *Straßenbahn* is used instead.

On the other hand German *Tunnel* is written *Tunell* in Austrian and Swiss showing a shift of accent besides – the German variant has the accent on the first syllable /'tʊnəl/ while the Austrian/Swiss one has it on the second syllable /tu'neɪ/.

More substantial changes in pronunciation (due to different orthography) do however appear in *Rummy*, pronounced /'roemi or 'rami/ in Austrian German but written and pronounced in a Frenchlike manner in Germany: *Rommé* /rɔ'me: or 'rɔme/.

Finally there are semantic differences although they seem to be rather rare. Most of them originated in the former GDR German which used to have its own development and consequently a specific treatment of some of the loans. They reflect a derogative attitude towards certain Anglo-American institutions.⁵ Although the GDR ceased to exist on 3 October, 1990, it is to be expected that the language spoken in the eastern part of today's Germany will still maintain some of its specific features and that it will take some time before the language becomes unified – if it ever does. One can expect, however, that the derogative meanings mentioned above will gradually disappear – some of them most likely already have.

Apart from this there are examples of loans which - during the time of the divided Germany – went their specific ways and acquired specific meanings, very often under Russian influence. One such Anglicism is *Broiler* which – as a term denoting »chicken fed in a special way so that it is low in fat« – is much more frequent in the east than in the west (where the native word *Hähnchen* is predominantly used) and also has a much wider meaning so that other poultry and even rabbits can be called 'broilers'.⁶ *Dispatcher* also had a different meaning in GDR and in FRG German: in the western part it means 'a person in an enterprise responsible for a fast and efficient distribution of goods, materials or work to be done'; in the east it is (was) 'a person who – in a factory, a mine, in transport or at a state farm – is responsible for control of the work process and the realization of production plans'. The question arises whether one should mark these differences on the semantic level or not, whether such – more or less minor - changes should be treated in the Dictionary at all.

Differences due to *regional variants* of German could be dealt with to a much greater extent but not all of them are necessarily relevant for our work on the Dictionary. Our aim was to show only those cases which might affect the planned structure of the Dictionary and which have to be treated in some special way that might not always be in accordance with the usual procedure.

⁵ More about this phenomenon in Muhvić-Dimanovski (1991:117)

⁶ See Carstensen, 1993:176

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ANGLICIZMI U NJEMAČKOM: PROBLEM VARIJANATA

U analizi anglicizama u njemačkom jedna od nauočljivijih značajki jest pojava velikoga broja varijanata. One se, dakako, pojavljuju i u drugim jezicima, ali njemački nedvojbeno ima mnogo više različitih tipova. Stoga se varijante anglicizama u njemačkome ne mogu rješavati standardnom obradom kao što je to moguće u nekim drugim jezicima, nego zahtijevaju poseban postupak, ponekad čak i uvođenje dvije (ili više) različitih natuknica u Rječniku anglicizama. Problem varijanata još je složeniji ako se uzmu u obzir *regionalne varijante* njemačkoga jezika, na primjer švicarska ili austrijska. Svaka od tih jezičnih zajednica ima stanovit broj specifičnih osobina u vezi s leksikom, ortografijom, izgovorom pa čak i gramatikom; stoga ne čudi što se posljedice osjećaju i u domeni posuđenica, u našem slučaju anglicizama.